

REMARKS

Claim 12 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over United States Patent No. 5,350,220 to Robert J. Atwell, Jr. (hereinafter "the Atwell reference"). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Applicant respectfully submits that the Atwell reference does not disclose or suggest all of the claimed features of the present invention. More specifically, Applicant respectfully submits that the Atwell reference does not disclose or suggest a wheel that includes, *inter alia*, an "inboard annular rim flange [that] includes a radially-extending inboard facing surface that is generally co-planar with a radially-extending inboard facing surface of the ring-like element," as now defined in independent Claim 12.

Applicant's Figure 1 shows one example of an embodiment with a radially-extending inboard annular rim flange [22B] including a radially-extending inboard facing surface [22B1] that is generally co-planar with a radially-extending inboard facing surface [26a] of the ring-like element [26].

In contrast, as can be seen in Figure 4 of the Atwell reference, assuming *arguendo* that the radially inner portion of circular flange 20 is considered as the claimed "ring-like element," it can be seen that the radially-extending right-hand surface of this element is not co-planar with the right-hand surface of the portion of the flange that is radially outside of flange 20. In the alternative, assuming *arguendo* that circular flange 18 is considered as the claimed "ring-like element," it can also be seen that flange 18 also lacks a radially-extending right-hand surface that is co-planar with a radially-extending right-hand

surface of an element that can be considered as equivalent to the claimed annular rim flange. Thus, because all of the claimed features are not disclosed or suggested in the cited reference, Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of this §103 rejection of independent Claim 12.

Claims 1, 8-11 and 13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over the Atwell reference in view of United States Patent No 5,564,792 to Archibald. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Applicant respectfully submits that the cited references fail to disclose or suggest all of the claimed features of the present invention. More specifically, Applicant respectfully submits that the cited references, alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest a wheel that includes, *inter alia*, “a single ring-like element, extending along a circumferential direction of the wheel, [that] is provided on a portion of the bead seat located between the hump of the inboard cylindrical bead seat and the inboard annular rim flange of the rim,” as now defined in independent Claim 1.

One example of an embodiment that includes the claimed "single ring-like element, extending along a circumferential direction of the wheel, [that] is provided on a portion of the bead seat located between the hump of the inboard cylindrical bead seat and the inboard annular rim flange of the rim,” is shown in Applicant's Figure 1. As can be seen in this figure, the single ring-like element 26 is the only ring-like element provided on the radially inner surface of rim 21. Such a configuration brings about weight reduction, without deteriorating road noise performance.

In contrast to the single ring-like element that is the only ring-like element provided on the inner surface of the rim, as recited in Claim 1, the device of Figure 4 of the Atwell reference includes two ring-like elements on the inner surface of the rim, as correctly acknowledged by the Examiner. Accordingly, the Examiner relied upon the Archibald reference for this feature.

However, Applicant respectfully submits that the Atwell reference teaches away from using only a *single* ring-like element by teaching that two mounting flanges should be used, with one on each side of the centerline 22 (of Figure 4) to obtain proper static and dynamic balancing of the wheel. *See e.g.*, column 2 (lines 63-66) (“It is important that the mounting flanges for the weights be placed on opposite sides of the centerline 22 in order to obtain a proper static and dynamic balancing of the wheel.”). Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that one of ordinary skill in the art would not have modified the device of the Atwell reference to include only a single ring-like element.

Further, Applicant respectfully submits that the Archibald reference does not overcome the teaching away of the Atwell reference. More specifically, with regard to the Archibald reference, Applicant respectfully submits that although this reference teaches the use of a single flange, it also teaches that the flange should be located at the axial center of mass of the wheel. *Compare* Archibald, col. 4, lines 43-55 (single flange at center of mass) *with* Archibald, col. 2, lines 31-36 (inboard and outboard flanges to balance forces). In contrast, the single ring-like element (flange) of independent Claim 1 is defined as being “provided on a portion of the bead seat located between the hump of the inboard cylindrical

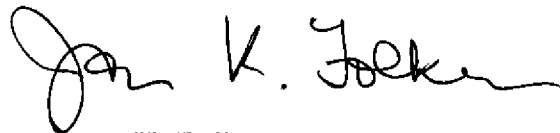
bead seat and the inboard annular rim flange of the rim.” Thus, in the device defined by Claim 1, the claimed ring-like element is located on the inboard side, and not at the axial center of mass as suggested by Archibald. Thus, even assuming *arguendo* that the Archibald reference overcomes the teaching away of the Atwell reference, the single flange of Archibald fails to read on the claimed single ring-like element of Claim 1. Accordingly, for at least these reasons, Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of this §103 rejection of independent Claim 1 and associated dependent Claims 8-11 and 13.

For all of the above reasons, Applicant requests reconsideration and allowance of the claimed invention. Should the Examiner be of the opinion that a telephone conference would aid in the prosecution of the application, or that outstanding issues exist, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

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